

VZCZCXRO1494  
PP RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHPW RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHEK #0930 2561101  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 121101Z SEP 08 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1343  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2647  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3037  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2422  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

UNCLAS BISHKEK 000930

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND SCA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: Environmental Specialist Plants Seeds of Consciousness in  
Kyrgyzstan

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

11. (SBU) Summary: IIP Speaker Jaime Lozano, Los Angeles  
Environmental Specialist with over twenty years experience in solid  
waste management, raised awareness of the solid waste disposal  
challenges facing Kyrgyzstan. He met with students, academicians,  
NGO's, and local authorities in the capital city and in the tourist  
area surrounding Lake Issyk-Kul. A visit to the Bishkek Municipal  
Landfill revealed that improper precautions are being taken to  
protect local residents from exposure to potential toxins and  
disease. End Summary.

BISHKEK LANDFILL: SOCIETY'S DIRTY LAUNDRY  
-----

12. (SBU) The city of Bishkek, including suburbs, has a population of  
nearly a million residents and produces roughly 300,000 tons of  
solid waste annually. Bishkek does not have a formal recycling  
program and the landfill, opened in 1973 and designed for 10 years  
of use, operates beyond capacity. The 59-acre landfill is poorly  
constructed, lacking a liner to protect the soil and water from  
run-off, or "leachate." According to standard landfill operating  
procedures, the landfill should be covered daily by dirt or other  
material to protect the air from toxins. The landfill in Bishkek is  
uncovered, and trash is collected in big mounds which smolder,  
producing toxic smoke.

LANDFILL TOXINS THREATENS LOCAL POPULATION  
-----

13. (SBU) Local residents, mostly internal migrants who have built  
settlements on land belonging to the landfill, rummage through  
trash, collecting wood, metal, cardboard, and plastic bottles. The  
landfill director denied that children are among the scavengers, but  
on a visit to the landfill during the first week of school, we saw  
several children picking through trash. The landfill is loosely  
guarded and is not fenced. The director explained that squatters  
have occupied 207 acres of adjacent land that was earmarked for  
landfill expansion, making it impossible to expand the landfill.  
Leachate, uncovered trash, and unchecked banned hazardous compounds  
pose a significant threat to the public health of local residents.

LOZANO: YOUR WASTE IS "GOLD" - DON'T THROW IT AWAY

-----

¶4. (SBU) Despite the sorry state of the Bishkek landfill, Lozano was optimistic that local authorities could find the political will to fix the problems. Lozano explained to local authorities that recycling would not only help the environment, but could also improve the local economy. In fact, some unofficial recycling is already taking place. The scavengers who live near the landfill wash and sell plastic bottles for recycling in China. There are several cardboard recycling centers, and a local company, "Altyn Ajidar" ("Golden Dragon"), makes paper products and boxes from recycled cardboard. However, much work needs to be done to educate the local population about separating out recyclables. Construction of a recycling sorting facility would not only reduce the amount of solid waste going into the landfill, but would also create jobs and humane working conditions for the people who live at the landfill.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: While Lozano was most often greeted with skepticism and a "show me the money" attitude, he quickly established himself as an expert on the details of solid waste disposal. Of particular interest to his Kyrgyz interlocutors were his ideas about how to make money on garbage. As a follow-on to his visit, Post will expand contacts with UNDP environmental specialists and will develop ways to increase local environmental awareness. Initial ideas include translation and publication of environmentally themed children's books and more public events with environmental themes.

GFOELLER